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ABSTRACT

Since Sweden will never again be a monolingual, monocultural country, new approaches to language instruction in the schools must be developed. Instruction in Swedish and in Swedish as a Foreign Language should be provided for all pupils for whom Swedish is truly a foreign language. Instructional programs should be designed to prevent the development of diglossia--the situation in which two languages or varieties of these are used for differing functions within a single speech community. To attain active bilingualism among immigrant children through instruction in school, seven conditions must be established. In their first language, students must acquire basic reading and writing skills and acquire a thoroughly grounded system of meaning. In their second language, students should learn pronunciation before approximately the age of 12. In both languages, students should be provided abundant, continuous language stimulation, functional and relevant instruction in technical subjects, and "contrastively-based" instruction provided by specially trained teachers. All languages should be accorded high prestige. Primary school instruction ought to be done in the pupils' first language. The middle school must be bilingual. At the junior high school level instruction should be mainly in Swedish. In high school, immigrant pupils must be given the opportunity to retain and further develop their home languages. (Author/RH)

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Immigrant Children and Bilingualism

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Language instruction in Swedish schools

The school subject which deals with the Swedish language was called the Mother Tongue up until the 1960's. This was justifiable - the mother tongue of all but a very few pupils was Swedish. Now, at the end of the 1970's, this situation is totally changed. For large groups of students in our schools, the idea of the mother tongue is not at all synonymous with the Swedish language. The school officials call the first language of the immigrants the home language. Suggestions have been put forward by the immigrants themselves to call this language the mother tongue. Home language is hardly an ideal term; it can be understood to imply that the immigrants' languages are not "real languages", like English, German and French, but rather they are languages which can only be used within a limited family circle. In this presentation, the term home language is used when referring to the current situation for instruction in this subject. Otherwise, first language is used to refer to the Swedish language for Swedes, and to the various mother tongues of the immigrants.

About ten percent of the pupils in the Swedish schools have a first language other than Swedish. According to all predictions, the number of pupils in this category will rise very rapidly. Thus, by the year 2000, every third child will belong to this category. Regardless of the extent and the nature of immigration in the future, Sweden will never again be a monolingual, monocultural country. This situation brings with it revolutionary consequences for Swedish society, and in particular for Swedish schools. Sweden must adapt itself to become a multilingual, multicultural society. Our country must provide, for all people who have a minority language as a first language, those conditions for living and study which make it possible for them to retain and develop their first languages and their cultural identities. Furthermore, they must receive the best possible instruction in the

language of the majority, Swedish. Only in this way can they achieve the active bilingualism which is a prerequisite for a complete and active life as members of a minority group in a society dominated by a majority.

Bilingualism and multilingualism are probably the normal condition for the majority of the world's peoples. Knowledge about bilingualism in other countries is naturally of interest and value to us. However, the language situation in Sweden has only partial resemblance to the situation in other countries. This presentation aims to point out and describe some of the most important factors leading to bilingualism among immigrant children and their parents in Sweden.

Sweden has only limited experience with and knowledge about its own native linguistic and cultural minorities. The neglect of the linguistic and cultural situation for the Finnish and Lappish minorities constitutes a serious political and humanitarian oversight. Up until World War II, only a handful of people came to Sweden as immigrants. These were generally well-educated, and had specific reasons for immigrating, such as special work assignments, or marriage to Swedes. It seemed unnecessary to give special instruction in Swedish to these people, or to others who did not have Swedish as a first language. Instruction in modern foreign languages has been strongly limited to the three major school languages: English, German and French. During the last decades, it has been possible to study other foreign languages in high school, primarily Spanish and Russian. With the exception of Spanish, none of these school languages is important as a first language for immigrants in Sweden. All of these languages belong to the same language family as Swedish, namely Indo-European. English and German, like Swedish, are members of the Germanic branch of Indo-European, while French and Spanish, as Romance languages, are closely related to our own language as well. Even Russian, a Slavic language, can hardly be considered a distant and specially deviant linguistic relative. On the other hand, common immigrant languages like Finnish and Turkish belong to totally different language families, and these languages differ considerably more from Swedish than the languages we know from

our language instruction in school. Since there are few Swedes who have a working knowledge of Finnish, Serbo-Croatian or Turkish, for example, immigration to Sweden implies that the country receives, through the immigrants, a corps of people with language abilities in these and many other languages. If immigrants are offered realistic possibilities to learn Swedish, then many people in Sweden can become actively bilingual in Swedish and those first languages which thus far have been rare in our country. As Swedes become interested in and inspired to learn immigrants' languages, the learning of these languages as second languages may rise rapidly in the long run. Among immigrant teachers and Swedes who are married to immigrants, there is already a noticeable tendency to learn languages like Finnish, Greek, Serbo-Croatian, Turkish etc. This development implies a very important contribution to this country's cultural and linguistic fund of knowledge.

Swedish as a Foreign Language

Language learning is a very time-consuming process. The amount of time set aside for instruction of immigrants is often very limited. The instruction for adults which is guaranteed by law, includes only 240 hours, which is not that much, considering the goals of the instruction, the preparation of the students and the general conditions for their studies. A considerable number of children come to Sweden with only one or two years of obligatory schooling left to be done. Instruction for these and other groups is often too limited in time, space and content. Intensive instruction for adults, which includes six to eight hours of classes per day, is extraordinarily demanding, especially since the participants are usually not used to studying, and therefore may find it difficult to change their routines so totally. In addition, some may be concerned about the most essential social and individual security in their lives. Instruction, after the workday is over, can also be tiring, especially as the work is ordinarily monotonous and physically exhausting.

The environment for instruction of immigrants differs markedly from that of other instruction. Thus, the majority of classes are held in rooms which were not designed to be used as classrooms, and which, in many cases are simply unsuitable, for example, because of noise from nearby workshops. Immigrant children and their teachers are often placed in cramped quarters several blocks from the school's main building. This naturally makes many of the contacts which teachers and students would like to have with colleagues and friends difficult or impossible. This type of arrangement naturally inhibits all attempts towards integration with other forms of instruction. It is not uncommon that two or more groups of immigrant pupils are placed in different corners of the same room. This arrangement is not only disturbing, but in particular, it is taxing to the pupils' concentration.

Since Swedish as a Foreign Language (SFL) is such a new subject, it has up until now been based on research and methodological developments only to a limited extent. This situation has inhibited both the training of teachers and the development of teaching materials. Swedish as a Foreign Language has brought to the fore certain linguistic problems which have already led to interesting research results, which, coming as they do from a new vantage point, have shed light on central elements in the grammatical description of the language. It is only logical for interest to be focussed on such grammatical phenomena as word inflection and word order. Nevertheless, when instructing Swedish pupils in their own language, it seems unnecessary to teach the rules for, e.g. plural inflection or question word order. This is because the pupils can for all intents and purposes apply these rules correctly - of course, without being able to formulate them - by the time they are four or five years old, that is before they start school. It is only a minor simplification to say that instruction in grammar within the subject known as Swedish, has two major parts: first, learning the description and classification systems (e.g. word classes and parts of speech), and second, directing attention to rules of correct usage (e.g. *snafora* and certain grammatical constructions) in the pupils' written work. In Swedish as a Foreign Language, on the

other hand the pupils must be taught facilitating rules for basic grammatical categories in the Swedish language, for example, pluralization, word order in questions, tense, and usage of the definite-indefinite distinction.

There is an analogous situation when it comes to pronunciation and vocabulary. Immigrant pupils must learn pronunciation patterns which Swedish pupils were able to master by the age of three or four, as well as many words which are part of the central vocabulary of the language, and which thus are generally learned by Swedish-speaking pupils before they come to school.

The fact that there is no tradition in teaching Swedish as a foreign language should not be seen only as a disadvantage. Many constructive suggestions have already arisen from the initiatives of concerned teachers. We are encouraged by the large and constantly expanding group of resourceful teachers in this subject who, without the inhibitions of preconceived notions of language instruction, seek out new working procedures and produce new and interesting teaching materials.

It is vitally important that Swedish as a Foreign Language now be generally recognized as a special subject for all pupils for whom it is truly a foreign language. SFL has a theory and method proper to the subject, both of which differ markedly from the theory and method for Swedish as an ordinary school subject.

Natural and cultural language learning

A distinction is often made between natural and cultural language learning. Natural language learning is language learning which the child goes through while he or she is growing up, while formal language learning which is directed by teachers and teaching materials is called cultural learning. Until recently, almost all of Sweden's inhabitants learned their first language in the natural way, while many, particularly the younger generations, have learned one or more languages culturally. We have, therefore, considerable knowledge of how pupils with Swedish as a first, naturally

acquired, language, should develop language skills further through instruction in Swedish in school. In addition, we have extensive experience dealing with students who have Swedish as a first language, and who later learn foreign languages culturally.

It is clear that the environment and goals of language acquisition are totally different for immigrant children than for Swedish children. The former must achieve first language competence in both their languages. This is a great challenge for Swedish education and for Swedish teachers. Immigrant children's acquisition of language does not correspond with our own earlier experiences of how language is acquired. These children cannot learn their home language in a natural way because languages other than Swedish are given such limited support and stimulation in Sweden. It is not natural, for example, to learn Arabic in Sweden. Even Finnish cannot be found in Swedish society to the extent which a natural acquisition of the language by children would call for. Comparatively few people speak Finnish, and with the exception of short contributions in the mass media, Finnish is seldom encountered outside the domain of the home.

Swedish schools offer comprehensive instruction in Swedish so that Swedish pupils can develop their language fully. Needless to say, instruction in the home language demands even more instruction if immigrant pupils are to attain first language competence in their home languages, because Sweden offers these children insufficient stimulation in their languages. At the same time, immigrant children ought not to receive first language instruction in their second "first language", i. e. Swedish. Unfortunately, this is what happens all too often in today's schools. Immigrant pupils are brought together with Swedish pupils for instruction which is planned and designed for those whose language was naturally acquired in early childhood. Neither should immigrant pupils be taught Swedish as modern foreign languages have traditionally been taught. In that case, there is a

considerable risk that they will never achieve first language competence in Swedish. For comparison, one can imagine what opportunities Swedish pupils might have to succeed in the labor market of an English-speaking country, in competition with those who have English as a naturally acquired first language! The comparison is even more obvious if it is made with other foreign languages, such as German and French.

In order for the immigrant children to achieve the intended first language competence in Swedish, it will be necessary to develop new forms of language instruction which originate from the pupils' own situation, and which cultivate the experiences and feelings they have in their new language environment. This instruction must also bring with it meaningful knowledge from areas other than just the target language, Swedish. The instructional difficulties previously discussed are many. Nevertheless, Swedish as a foreign language has one advantage in comparison with other foreign languages. The Swedish society is immediately outside of the classroom. Sweden is full of Swedes who speak and write Swedish. Many can be found in school or in the immediate vicinity. Every attempt to achieve relevance, and connections with reality, by leaving the classroom and embarking on field assignments, field trips and realistically-motivated contacts with Swedes and with Swedish authorities, organizations, clubs and groups of various kinds, will be an effective step in a necessary effort towards a relevant, functional language instruction.

Obligatory instruction in English applies also to immigrant children, and this constitutes a very great difficulty for many of them. Even the instruction and materials which are said to be based on the so-called direct method are naturally built on the teachers' and textbook authors' knowledge of what the common difficulties are for Swedish pupils who learn English. For immigrant children, this hidden contrastivity implies however that their difficulties in learning English via Swedish can be compared with, say, a situation in which we Swedes would be forced to learn Serbo-Croatian in Russia via Russian teachers and Russian textbooks in Serbo-Croatian. This type of forced learning can only be

more difficult and time consuming. Immigrant pupils ought to receive instruction in English via their first languages. This is of course realistic only for certain large first language groups. Nevertheless, for all pupils, instruction in foreign languages ought to be adapted to the pupils' first language. Therefore, it is necessary for all language teachers to acquire knowledge of the immigrant children's first languages, not just teachers of SFL, but also teachers of English, German, Spanish and so on. It is only in this way that all language instruction can center on the pupils as much as possible.

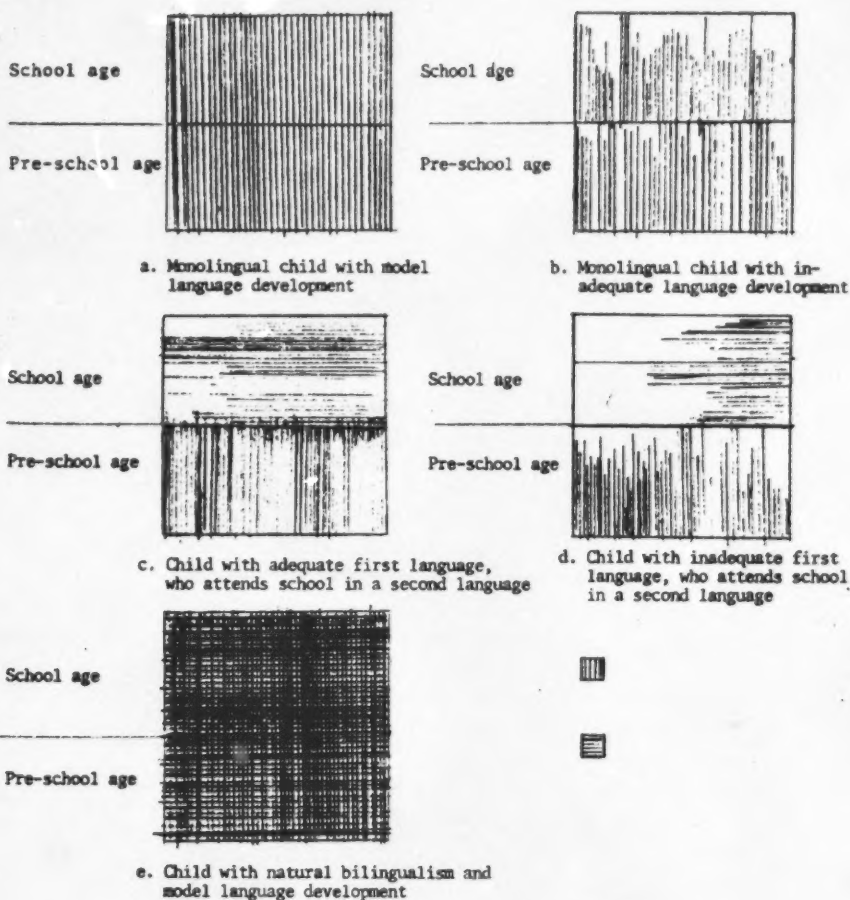


Fig. 1. Language development in the pre-school and elementary school years

The language of the school (and that of the teachers and textbooks) must be adapted to the language of the pupils when they start school. If this is not the case, the risk is great that the absolute and relative deficiencies in language development will increase during the school years. The risks for an unfavorable language development are particularly great if the school language is not the same as the language used during the pre-school years, and particularly if the latter is inadequate (see fig. 1 d).

Diglossia

For most children, the domain for learning new words and concepts during the preschool years is limited to the ordinary experiences and occurrences of the home. If school instruction takes place in a language other than the pupil's home language, the phenomenon known within sociology of language as diglossia can easily arise. This term is used to describe a situation in which two languages or varieties are used for differing functions within a single speech community. (The classical example of diglossia is Paraguay, where Spanish is the official language, while Guaraní, an Amerindian language is the informal language which is used by everyone in conversation outside the official domain.) If all knowledge is acquired through the medium of one of the individual's two languages, while all emotions are expressed in the other language, there is a grave risk that a very unfortunate form of diglossia may arise. Unhappily, it seems to be a common situation for minority children in all countries, not the least among immigrant children in Sweden.

Without active experiences in a language, it is very difficult to acquire that language. This situation implies two important challenges for the Swedish school. It must create opportunities for gaining knowledge through the medium of the home language as well as Swedish, and it must give immigrant children a chance to experience emotional involvement and expression through Swedish, as well as through the home language. The best way to give the pupils' home languages a realistic chance to come up to the level of a first language is to arrange for part of the instruction in technical subjects (like mathematics, social studies etc.) to be done in these home languages.

Furthermore, the school ought to arrange opportunities for emotional involvement through the medium of Swedish. This could be accomplished by using stimuli such as literature, music, theater, and art activities, plus field trips, and field studies within various sectors of society, as well as through athletics and other forms of friendly companionship

with Swedish children during and between classes. The pupils must also experience concrete sensations which appeal to sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

It is often pointed out, in discussions of children's learning of vocabulary, that children do not learn abstract words and concepts until later in childhood. It seems that many scholars involved in this discussion are convinced that children of preschool age only learn concrete words, and that the learning of abstract words begins when the child comes to school. The consequence for immigrant children would be a diglossia, with concrete words in the first language, and abstract words in the second. It seems that this point of view needs to be made somewhat less rigid.

It is clear that seven year old children already know many abstract concepts (for example the division of time, colors, shapes and certain traits of character), while they may lack names for many concrete objects which they meet for the first time when they come to school. A more thorough categorization than concrete - abstract is necessary to be able to describe satisfactorily how children learn new words. The conceptual pair concrete and abstract must be combined with an analysis of levels of abstraction, domains and semantic categories.

Conditions for achieving active bilingualism

In what follows, we will discuss seven important conditions, point by point, which must obtain, in order for these children to attain active bilingualism through instruction in school. A more general condition, however, is that the society, as well as the school, must give them social and individual security, as well as realistically-grounded expectations that Sweden really wants to become a multilingual, multicultural country, in which bilingual, bicultural people are a valuable and necessary resource. If this general prerequisite exists, then we believe that the following conditions will go very far in achieving our goal of active bilingualism.

IMMIGRANTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS
OFTEN CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING

First language (L ¹)	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>
<u>Pronunciation</u>	L ¹ 's phonological system	L ¹ 's phonological system
<u>Grammatical patterns</u>	L ¹ 's grammatical patterns	L ¹ 's grammatical patterns for spoken language
<u>Vocabulary</u>	L ¹ 's vocabulary (CERTAIN LOSSES ARE REPLACED BY ADDITIONS FROM L ²)	L ¹ 's vocabulary, essentially everyday and emotional words from the home domain
Second language (L ²)	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>
<u>Pronunciation</u>	L ¹ 's phonological system (WITH CERTAIN EFFORTS OF ADJUSTMENT TOWARDS L ²)	L ² 's PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM
<u>Grammatical patterns</u>	those grammatical patterns which are common to both L ¹ and L ² A LIMITED NUMBER OF FREQUENT L ² - PATTERNS Some L ¹ -patterns	← ??
<u>Vocabulary</u>	L ² 's VOCABULARY, ESSENTIALLY FROM THE DOMAIN OF THE JOB	L ² 's VOCABULARY, MOSTLY FROM DOMAINS OF SCHOOL AND FRIENDS

Fig. 2. Language skills among adult immigrants and among immigrant children

The first language is written in small letters, THE SECOND LANGUAGE IN CAPITALS. Language FEATURES COMMON to both languages are written with small and CAPITAL LETTERS.

It seems likely that grammatical patterns in the second language of immigrant children display the same characteristics as those of adult immigrants, though in differing proportions. If the immigrant children do not acquire the vocabulary of the school domain in L², their language is limited to the domain of friends. If the first language is not made a language of instruction, L¹ can hardly be expected to develop beyond the domain of the home.

1. Acquisition of basic reading and writing skills in the first language

The most important instruction which the school gives is the teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing. Practically all knowledge acquired later is built on these skills. Our ability to read and write makes us independent individuals, who can acquire knowledge and communicate with other people on our own. Because of the pedagogically essential connection with earlier skills and knowledge it is only natural that pupils be able to learn these basic skills in a language they know, and not in a foreign language. For the vast majority of immigrant children their first language is the language they know best and this is therefore the language in which they ought to learn to read and write.

2. A thoroughly-grounded system of meaning in the first language

When it comes to the phonological and grammatical systems, the first language is well-developed, and adequate as a basis for acquiring further knowledge by the age of seven. On the other hand, vocabulary learning has only just begun, and thus the vocabulary comprises only a few domains at that age. It needs to be expanded and strengthened, in order to be able to serve as a firm ground for learning new vocabulary. If, for example, it would be possible to improve vocabulary learning by giving the preschool an active role in the child's language development during the period from four to seven, then the primary school could begin its instruction on a more firm basis, and, on the average, at a significantly higher level. The remaining development of the language as a whole (both for Swedish and for immigrant pupils) would thus be better and more rapid.

3. Learning of pronunciation of the second language before approximately the age of twelve

In order to be able to take advantage of the child's ability to acquire an accent-free pronunciation, training in pronunciation of the second language ought to be done before the critical age sets in, when this ability is lost. Not only pronunciation, but also important concepts and correspond-

ing parts of the vocabulary in a second language can be difficult to acquire and bring up to the level of the first language, if one comes in contact with the second language too late. Thus, many important and decisive experiences and feelings from childhood and young adulthood may only or primarily belong to the domain of the first language. It is partly these contradictory tendencies which make it difficult to establish clearly that the second language should be introduced at a particular age. What is crucial must be the quantity and quality of the activating language stimulation which the children receive. We have seen from experience that children who live in a bilingual milieu with a wealth of stimulation in both languages usually have a good chance to become bilingual. If immigrant children are early on offered full and varied stimulation to language development in their first language, the opportunity will present itself to bring in the second language, Swedish, earlier, with the gains in time and results which this earlier introduction could bring with it. As we said above, the period from four to seven seems important, but is often insufficiently utilized for acquisition of a first language. In the same way, the period from ten to twelve seems vital for second language instruction which has first language-like competence as its goal. Even now, it would seem possible to make better use of this period than is done now, in general.

4. Abundant, continuous language stimulation in both languages during all the school years

Both languages must be languages of instruction during all the school years. It is cruel and meaningless to cut short a language-learning process once it has begun by saying, for example, to immigrant pupils, that after the primary school, they must take care of further development of their first languages themselves.

Instruction ought not to be designed only as a means of communicating knowledge, but it should also give the children opportunities to express their emotions and influence others which will give their language skills a chance to be as comprehensive as possible.

5. High prestige for both languages

The languages studied must have high prestige if those studying them are to be motivated to aim at expert knowledge and skills in these languages. Neither Swedish nor the immigrant languages enjoy high prestige because they are world languages. Nevertheless, they can acquire rather high regional prestige if they are important, functional, and respected means of communication in a certain country or geographical area. Swedish is necessary in Sweden, and therefore important for anyone who plans to live the larger part of his or her life in this country. But the majority of immigrants intend to return to their home countries as soon as the opportunity arises. The immigrant languages can attain higher prestige, either when the countries in which these languages are used gain greater economic or political power, and when their cultures become recognized and admired, or alternatively when these languages are shown to have an important function in our country. The first alternative may perhaps be realizable in the long run for a language like Arabic, but the majority of languages probably ought to be encouraged to look for higher prestige within Sweden's boundaries.

6. A functional and relevant instruction in technical subjects in both languages

It is not possible to achieve first language competence via cultural language acquisition, that is, via traditional language instruction. In order for the pupils to obtain so many active language skills as possible, they ought to be able to acquire knowledge through the medium of both languages. It is also necessary to take into account the very limited time available for learning two languages while the pupils are in school. If both languages are employed for instruction in technical subjects, language study will gain a clearly relevant character. This would also seem to be the easiest way to give the home language the higher prestige they need. When the instruction is led by teachers who have one of these languages as a first language - Swedish or the home language in question - the instruction will be functionally motivated for the pupils. It is functional to speak Swedish with a

Swedish teacher and Finnish with a Finnish teacher. Many pupils certainly do not experience traditional language instruction as functional, but rather as a somewhat artificial situation where both teachers and pupils, who have a common, functional first language, attempt to perfect a technical skill in another, foreign code system. Swedish as a Foreign Language has a distinct advantage in comparison with other foreign languages. Instruction takes place in a Swedish-speaking country, Sweden, which gives the instruction a relevance for all both inside and outside the classroom.

7. A contrastively-based instruction, planned and executed by teachers who are adequately trained and contrastively-aware

In order to carry out a program in bilingual education, all teachers involved ought to have very expert knowledge of both languages and both cultures. Considering the fact that there already are about 130 different first languages in the Swedish school system, it would seem impossible to satisfy such a demand. Of course, it is highly desirable for as many teachers of Swedish as a Foreign Language as possible to learn one immigrant language. Conversely it is an unavoidable requirement that home language teachers have not only excellent knowledge of their own language, but also have very good expertise in and about the Swedish language.

For both teacher groups, contrastive cultural knowledge is also necessary. If the immigrant pupils should be able to become functionally bilingual, and become active participants in two cultures it is necessary that instructional time be used efficiently. This implies that new learning of knowledge and skills should build on old, and that both cultures should support one another.

In order to make possible a contrastive base for instruction, teacher training must be designed and adapted for the subjects Swedish as a Foreign Language and the various home languages. Swedish as a Foreign Language is at least as important for the immigrant pupils as Swedish is for Swedish pupils. And Finnish, Turkish and so on are not less meaningful than other modern languages. This fact brings with it the demand that the training of teachers in these subjects must be at least of equal standard.

Teachers of children with special needs receive education comprising two or three terms above and beyond the ordinary, obligatory teacher training. Immigrant children are also children with special needs. They have a right to an adequate education from capable teachers, who are trained for the work they do. Because the pupils are expected to achieve first language competence in both their languages, they obviously need first language teachers - one with Swedish and one with their home language as a first language - in order to receive a functional and relevant language instruction, and an instruction which gives them totally adequate linguistic role models.

The school in a multilingual society

How should the school be organized so as to satisfy the seven conditions for active bilingualism named above? The implementation of all these conditions would imply revolutionary changes for the Swedish schools. But reality is also going through revolutionary changes. Within three decades, the number of pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish will rise from one in a hundred to one in three.

Primary school instruction (grades 1-3) ought to be done in the pupils' first language. However, it is important for the child to get a few hours per week of Swedish from the beginning. These hours should not be used for any traditional type of language instruction, however. The content of the lessons ought to be directed by the child's own experiences of and contacts with the Swedish language. Because the children live in Sweden, hear Swedish around them, and see Swedish signs, posters, street names, subtitles on TV and so on, it is obvious that they must wonder about the content of much of what they see and hear. If they have the chance to ask questions, and to get answers to these questions, as well as the chance to talk with a Swedish-speaking teacher, their natural curiosity about their surroundings will hopefully be sustained. If we postpone the answers to the children's questions until later, it may well be too late. By then, they will probably have stopped asking questions and seeking answers, and have instead resigned themselves to a passive attitude to the Swedish language and to Swedish-speaking people.

The most difficult level to plan for is the middle school (grades 4-6). It must be bilingual, so that the pupils gain basic knowledge material via both their languages. It would be difficult to establish ideal proportions for each language, however. One might say that because the minority language is constantly the threatened language, it ought to receive more than half of the hours available for instruction. Fifty to seventy-five percent for the minority language and twenty-five to fifty percent for the majority language, Swedish, would seem to be a realistic relation between languages. It is reasonable to assume that there would be a difference in this respect among the various first language groups. For the middle school, we must bring together experiences from different types of instructional models, and carry out new, exploratory investigations in order to have a more definite basis for decision-making.

At the junior high school level (grades 7-9) instruction should be mainly in Swedish, but certain parts must still be performed in the first language so that skills in and knowledge of this language should not stagnate, but instead should be improved and expanded. The organizational sketch, fig. 3, comprises only the grade school, (grades 1-9). This should not disguise the fact that the time before and after the grade school is extremely important for immigrant children's language development. For all children, the four to seven year old preschool period is decisive for their future success in school and in their working life. Immigrant children must be able to go to a preschool and day care center where the teachers and assistants speak the children's own language. Otherwise, the risk is great that the school will be unable to help the child to attain a well-functioning language, either for the first language or for Swedish.

After the grade school years, the immigrant pupils must be given the opportunity to retain and further develop their home languages in high school (grades 10-12). Moreover, they must receive an education which is adapted for those who do not have Swedish as a first language. It may be necessary for a year of preparation for high school to be arranged, in particular for the immigrant pupils who have come to

Sweden during the junior high school years. An extra year, which will act as a connecting link between elementary school and high school would certainly be easier for the immigrant pupils to accept than constant shortcomings and failures during high school. Experiences from existing one year 'introductory courses' support this view.

Unfortunately, the ideal instruction sketched above must carry with it some reservations, due to complications of various kinds. All pupils do not attend Swedish schools all the time. Those who come to Sweden during the middle school or junior high school periods should already have acquired a meaning system and the most important basic skills in the first language. On the other hand, the time for learning Swedish up to the level of a first language will be short, often much too short. At the same time, many immigrant children are born in Sweden. For them, we can predict increasing problems with the home language, as the importance of the parents' language is reduced after a longer period of residence in Sweden. Home language teachers report that younger siblings often have poorer knowledge in the home language when they begin school than do older siblings in the same family. In some cases, this seems to depend on the fact that children in the same family speak more and more Swedish with each other, while the parents continue to speak the home language. What this means for the family unit, even in the short run, is all too obvious.

Many children grow up in bilingual or multilingual families. Theoretically, advice is easy to give: Each parent should speak as much as possible with his or her child in his or her own language. But, we must also understand that this advice implies major efforts and many artificial situations for a bilingual or multilingual family, if this type of language program is to be strictly carried out.

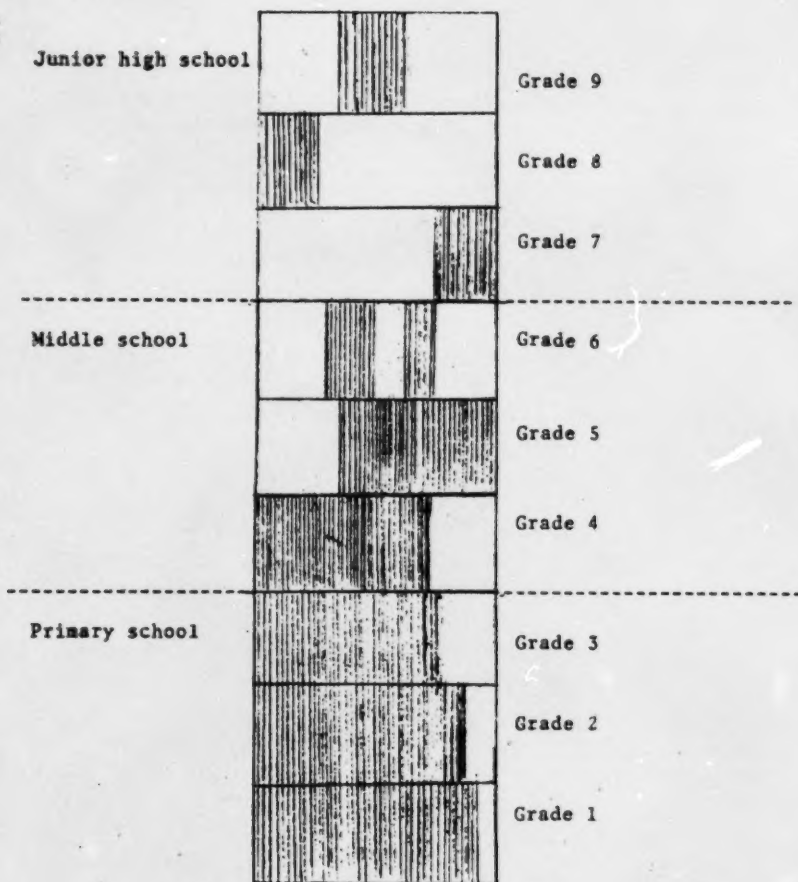


Fig. 3 Bilingual grade school



- first language



- second language

The ideal proportions at the middle school level should probably vary, depending on the typological and cultural distance between the first and second language. However, the number of lessons conducted in second language, Swedish, should increase in order to avoid too abrupt a transition on the one hand between the primary school and the middle school and on the other between instruction in the home language and instruction in Swedish.

A bilingual education in its ideal form can probably only be given to large first language groups, in large municipalities with many immigrants. Even there, it seems likely that organizational problems concerning class assignments, teaching positions, transportation etc., will be significant. As the tendency grows towards more, smaller first language groups, it seems as though these problems can only increase. However, the existence of many problematic small language groups ought not to prevent us from taking desirable and feasible action for the benefit of the larger groups.

Many voices have been raised, either openly or in private, in opposition to an educational policy which has active bilingualism as its goal. Apprehensions that the national unit will be endangered are not really current in present-day Sweden. There is no indication that Sweden as a nation, the Swedish language, or Swedish culture, should be the least bit threatened by the presence of minority groups in the country. The major effects which our language and culture are exposed to originate instead from foreign super-powers' world-wide language and cultural pattern. Many teachers feel that it is difficult to win respect and sympathy for the minority cultures when the Swedish youth culture, particularly in areas like music, films, fashion, sports etc., is so filled with copies of American and multinational models (ABBA, discotheques, skateboards etc.)

In our preceding discussion, we have emphasized the obvious advantages of a linguistic and cultural pluralism for Sweden. A bilingual school, which aims to make many citizens actively bilingual and thus to bring about a multinational society, implies nevertheless major economic commitments. But what would the alternatives cost? It has been said that the present middle-aged generation is the first in human history to know more than its parents' generation. At the same time, the next generation growing up is the first in human history which, in many ways, nobody needs. The rising unemployment among youths affects primarily those groups which have been unable to succeed in school. If immigrant youth particularly

are forced to become unemployed, because the school has failed to give them the necessary tool for personality development - a language they can use effectively - it would seem that the strain on solidarity within Swedish society would become severe and painful. No one should believe that youth from immigrant groups will be excluded from jobs and ordinary social contacts without it costing Swedish society dearly. Actually, the costs for care of mental, physical and social injuries among disenfranchized immigrant youths is certainly significantly greater than the costs of an comprehensive investment in bilingual education for a linguistically and culturally pluralistic Sweden. For teachers, and all other people who believe that education can change reality, the choice is easy and the direction clear.